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New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Nigeria	Mr. Amieyeofori
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2011/43)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2011/43)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting. On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia.

Under rule 39 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/43, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lamberto Zannier.

Mr. Zannier: The report before the Council details the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) from 19 October to 15 January 2010. Today, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the major events of the reporting period and subsequent developments, as well as to the principal challenges to security and stability in Kosovo and how we believe they can best be addressed.

Political instability and uncertainty have characterized the past three months in Kosovo. In December, the Kosovo authorities organized the first Assembly elections not held within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and in which UNMIK played no role. The day of the election passed without serious security incident. Kosovo Serb participation, except in the North, where it was negligible, was the largest since the general elections organized by UNMIK in 2001. However, local and international observers reported widespread irregularities and manipulation of votes. The Kosovo Supreme Court, the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel and the Central Elections Commission tried to address these problems, and voting was repeated in several municipalities. External observers, however, stated that irregularities persisted at some locations.

With the certification of the final results now behind them, Kosovo leaders are in the process of forming a new Government, which I hope will be sufficiently strong and stable to engage authoritatively in a substantive dialogue with Belgrade. I would also note the calls by various members of the international community — which I, personally, fully endorse — for Kosovo to have a Government with clean hands.

This period also saw the publication of a report by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Special Rapporteur, Dick Marty, concerning allegations of organized criminal activities, including trafficking in human organs, by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in northern Albania in 1999. On 25 January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution calling for an investigation of allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo.

In my view, this Council of Europe report needs to be taken seriously and an investigation should be launched as a matter of priority in the interest of all. In this regard I cannot but urge all those with pertinent knowledge, including Mr. Marty, to make any and all evidence available to the competent investigating authority without delay. Of course, it is crucial that adequate protection be provided to all witnesses. I have discussed the matter with the Head of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), Mr. Xavier Bout de Marnhac, who has assured me that EULEX has the expertise and jurisdiction to handle the investigation under resolution 1244 (1999). My understanding is that EULEX would be ready to assume any responsibilities assigned to it in this matter.

For my part, I can only reiterate that UNMIK will give its full support to the investigating authority.

Beyond these issues, while the security situation in Kosovo has remained largely unchanged since the last reporting period and unresolved political issues continue to challenge Kosovo's long-term stability, I would like to draw the Council's attention to another problem that has become increasingly pressing. Mounting fiscal difficulties and the possible economic hardship they may cause could soon overshadow political differences as the greatest threat to Kosovo's stability.

The International Monetary Fund has warned that Kosovo can ill afford the implementation of recent campaign promises of substantial pay raises for teachers and other civil servants, which the Government has stated it intends to finance by enforcing tax revenue collection. However, the relatively low level of tax collection is just one of a number of economic difficulties facing the Kosovo authorities. The low level of foreign direct investment and high unemployment are also cause for concern. Kosovo faces a €1.8-billion trade deficit, and its exports amount to just 14 per cent of the value of imports. To add to Kosovo's economic troubles, the agreement with the European Union (EU) on preferential treatment of Kosovo goods has not yet been renewed.

Kosovo also suffers from the highest unemployment in the West Balkans, estimated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at almost 45 per cent, coupled with the lowest per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the region. Dependency on the Kosovo diaspora, particularly among low-income members of the rural population is high. A recent UNDP study found that one in five households in Kosovo receive remittances from abroad, which amount to approximately 11 per cent of GDP.

Unresolved political issues are also contributing to Kosovo's economic challenges, as the Kosovo authorities seek to find a way of participating in regional economic mechanisms with non-recognizing States without UNMIK. In fact, UNMIK continues to facilitate Kosovo's presence in a variety of such regional forums, including the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA).

This year UNMIK/Kosovo has the rotating chairmanship of CEFTA, and intense consultations have taken place with all key stakeholders to find appropriate modalities to ensure the participation of all CEFTA members in this year's meetings. As signatories on behalf of Kosovo, our presence is required at CEFTA meetings; accordingly, UNMIK will engage to facilitate Kosovo's participation and ensure that the CEFTA process is not blocked. I urge all stakeholders to work towards finding solutions to the pressing economic problems facing Kosovo, and to rethink Kosovo's budget projections as quickly as possible in order to ensure that the population will not face undue and potentially destabilizing hardship.

The weak economic situation is doubtless one of the primary impediments to the returns process, but I am concerned regarding the chilling effect on returns of recent incidents of attacks on minority community returnees, including the recent assault on a Kosovo Serb in Istog/Istok municipality on 28 January, and the attack on a Kosovo-Egyptian couple by two Kosovo Albanian males in Deçan/Dečani municipality on 23 January. The municipal authorities have condemned these incidents, which Kosovo police are investigating. Still, every such incident can dissuade others from returning.

Unresolved issues in northern Kosovo continue to be a key challenge facing Kosovo's long-term stability, with the potential to influence the security and stability of the region. While security incidents have largely involved damage to property, this period was marked by the murder of a Kosovo Bosniak whose home in northern Kosovo was to be used as a polling station for the elections called by the Kosovo authorities. While police have yet to conclude their investigation, including in respect of alleged connections with organized crime networks, speculation that the murder may also have been intended to intimidate those who cooperate with the Kosovo institutions heightened tensions.

Opposition by northern Kosovo Serbs to engagement with the Kosovo institutions continues. Recently, protesters gathered to prevent the inauguration of a newly renovated park and playground in northern Mitrovica, sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development and the Kosovo authorities' northern Mitrovica municipal planning team, forcing the cancellation of the ceremony.

UNMIK continues to engage closely on a daily basis with northern Kosovo's communities. Such

engagement, and continuing consultation and coordination with all relevant stakeholders, are essential in northern Kosovo. However, I have to point out that, contrary to last year, the municipality in southern Mitrovica has chosen not to engage in a process of consultations to manage the next phase of the reconstruction of houses for Kosovo Albanian returnees to northern Kosovo. That may lead to instability on the ground. In addition, Pristina-based media have continued to single out members of my staff in northern Kosovo on the basis of their nationality, thereby exposing them to potential security risks.

Nevertheless, UNMIK will continue to attempt to engage in proactive mediation between the communities and to act as a link between the leaders in northern Kosovo and the Pristina authorities, along with promoting economic development and stability in close cooperation with the United Nations Kosovo Team, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and our other partners on the ground.

We hope that the planned census in Kosovo will be able to proceed as scheduled. The United Nations Office for Project Services, as a status-neutral entity, has agreed to conduct the census north of the Ibër/Ibar River. However, in recent weeks there have been calls by representatives of the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija for Kosovo Serbs to boycott the census. In my view, such calls risk harming the long-term welfare of Kosovo's residents, regardless of ethnicity. I urge all parties to recognize the value that a long-overdue census can contribute to the wellbeing of Kosovo's inhabitants, and ensure that the census takes place on the basis of procedures fully compatible with resolution 1244 (1999).

There will be no long-term stability and development of Kosovo without a successful process of reconciliation among the communities. There is therefore a pressing need to launch the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and to work towards establishing viable cooperation and lasting peace and security. Issues of missing persons and sustainable returns of internally displaced persons and refugees can also be most effectively addressed through dialogue between the parties. Belgrade has stressed its readiness to begin the EU-facilitated dialogue called for by the General Assembly, the beginning of which has been delayed as a result of the political instability in Kosovo over the past few months. Now that the formation of a new Government appears imminent, I welcome statements that the authorities in Pristina will also be ready to engage in this important process. We in UNMIK remain committed to continue working closely with the EU in bringing this process forward.

On behalf of all UNMIK staff, I wish to thank the Council for its continued support, and to reiterate our assurance that we will continue to implement the mandate with which it has entrusted us. For our part, we remain firmly committed to continue operating to the best of our ability so as to ensure lasting peace and stability in Kosovo.

The President: I thank Mr. Zannier for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić.

Mr. Jeremić (Serbia): I would like to thank you very much, Madame President, for convening this meeting of the Security Council on Kosovo pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999).

I welcome the presence of Special Representative Lamberto Zannier. The United Nations remains a crucial actor in the province. We believe it is critical for all responsible stakeholders on the ground, together with the Security Council, to reaffirm support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as an indispensable pillar of peace and stability.

At the outset of my remarks, I would like to reaffirm my Government's position on the unilateral declaration of independence by the ethnic-Albanian authorities of our southern province of Kosovo and Metohija. For us, it is null and void. We do not, and we shall not, recognize Pristina's self-declared independence, explicitly or implicitly. This is mandated by the democratic will of the people of Serbia and enshrined in our Constitution. A substantial majority of United Nations Member States, and of those seated on the Security Council, continue to respect Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

On behalf of my nation, I would like to reiterate our deep gratitude for their support and solidarity. We urge them to maintain their principled position with regard to the separatists, thus ensuring that unilateral attempts to impose outcomes to ethnic and territorial

disputes are not legitimized, and thereby preventing Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence from becoming a dangerous and destabilizing precedent for the world community. It will also help to maintain a healthy international environment within which the long-awaited dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which the world supported by acclamation last September, can take place.

I want to emphasize that Serbia remains strongly committed to those talks, despite delays in getting them off the ground. We share the Secretary-General's assessment contained in the report before the Council today (S/2011/43) that the dialogue is a valuable opportunity to resolve long-standing issues, which would contribute significantly to the consolidation of peace, stability and reconciliation in Kosovo and throughout the region.

Last autumn, the Republic of Serbia announced that it was ready to start the dialogue. We are still waiting for Pristina. We hope that they too will be ready soon. There will be many issues to discuss, and some of them will be complicated. As we move forward, we should strive to build trust and understanding. Results will surely come, if the parties demonstrate good faith and work hard to achieve constructive arrangements that would benefit all the residents of the territory. That could pave the way for what the dialogue should ultimately produce, namely, a transformative peace between Serbs and Albanians throughout our region.

My country is dedicated to solving all differences at the negotiating table. We welcome the opportunity presented by the dialogue. We intend to make the most of it, just as we reasonably expect other parties to do the same. It is therefore critically important that no one try to alter realities on the ground while discussions get under way. Numerous reports by the Secretary-General have warned us of that danger, including the one before us today.

The province's ethnic-Albanian authorities continue to encourage illegal construction of new, or the expansion of existing, housing settlements — a direct challenge to the authority of the UNMIK Administration Mitrovica. They also seem to be intent on extending the reach of the Pristina-based institutions to North Kosovo, against the will of the local population. Serbia remains deeply concerned by these and other provocative actions, which cannot contribute to peace and stability in North Kosovo and which could dramatically, and perhaps fatally, undermine the dialogue.

That is one of the many reasons that the United Nations reporting function remains indispensable. Serbia welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment, as stated in today's report, to keep the Security Council informed of all developments in the dialogue. The Council's leading role in determining, and providing legitimacy to, a comprehensive settlement is indispensable, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Council's primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, as assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations status neutrality and that of all organizations that operate under its overall authority — such as the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo — remain the only acceptable framework within which all of us can work together to improve the lives of ordinary people in Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnicity.

UNMIK's principled commitment to the external representation function for Kosovo — its obligation under resolution 1244 (1999) — is highly appreciated. We are deeply concerned, however, at the "lack of enthusiasm" by the province's ethnic-Albanian authorities on this issue. Today's report reconfirms that Pristina refuses to attend a number of regional and international meetings for which UNMIK's facilitation is required. This includes sessions of the Regional Cooperation Council, as well as the Central European Free Trade Agreement, which UNMIK, as the signatory to this free trade agreement on behalf of Pristina, is slated to chair throughout 2011.

We hope that Pristina will come to embrace the constructive approach offered by UNMIK. As the report underlines, their current stance "will directly affect Kosovo's economic and social development". (*S/2011/43, para. 47*) It will also affect how seriously rules are taken by the region's democracies. The question of UNMIK's facilitation cannot be separated from the necessity for all to adhere to the terms of treaties and legally binding agreements. No one in the Western Balkans — or, for that matter, in the wider world — should be permitted simply to ignore

established procedures or attempt to unilaterally impose new ones. For change to be legitimate, agreement is required. Until one is established, the consistent adherence to existing working arrangements is the only way to ensure that regional cooperation continues to improve and stability is strengthened.

The report before us draws attention to the small number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returns by non-ethnic Albanians. For this reporting period, the number of Kosovo Serbs exercising their right of return is estimated to be around 120, out of the total 205,835 expelled since June 1999, according to the figures of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The consistently low number of returning IDPs is in line with the September 2010 Amnesty International report that states that Amnesty International, UNHCR and other international organizations "do not consider that conditions for the sustainable return for Serbs currently exist in Kosovo". The same document concludes that the situation at present, and for the long term, is both unstable and uncertain. This represents a failure of monumental proportions.

I would like to remind the Council that the Republic of Serbia has repeatedly urged stakeholders to focus on the central humanitarian issue of internally displaced persons. I hope that a way can be found to empower Kosovo Serb IDPs to exercise their right of return immediately and unconditionally.

The Secretary-General's report underscores recent developments in Serbian cultural and religious heritage issues in the province. We appreciate UNMIK's critical role in facilitating activities in Kosovo of both UNESCO and the Council of Europe-led Reconstruction and Implementation Commission. The Commission was established in the wake of the March 2004 pogrom, which resulted in the destruction of 35 Serbian Orthodox Church holy sites over a three-day period. Despite a number of successful projects, the Commission has still not completed its work in the province. We urge all potential donor countries to contribute to the next round of funding for the Commission, so that its valuable contribution to the reconstruction of destroyed Serbian churches and monasteries may be completed.

The report refers both to the 26 December enthronement of His Grace Teodosije as Bishop of Raška-Prizren and all of Kosovo and Metohija, as well as to the fact that the Orthodox Christmas Day liturgy took place in the same church less than a fortnight later. On each of those occasions, held in the ancient Serbian capital city of Prizren, representatives of other religious communities in Kosovo were in attendance. We welcome this and other inter-faith contacts, and we appreciate UNMIK's continuing encouragement thereof. We also appreciate the commitment of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) to maintaining a static presence at some of our most important holy sites, including the Dević Monastery, as well as the Visoki Dečani Monastery and the Patriarchate of Peje/Peć, which both remain on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

By noting the desecration of a number of Serbian holy sites during the reporting period, the report once more draws our attention to what can happen as KFOR downsizes. Unfortunately, the report provides no details of these hate crimes, nor does it indicate the arrest of any perpetrators. The culture of impunity for attacks on places that represent the core of Serbian national identity continues unabated. We call on all relevant authorities to make it a priority to investigate these distressing incidents.

The roots of democracy have not taken hold in Kosovo. Today's report presents the findings of the United Nations Development Programme's 2010 democratization index for Kosovo, which concludes that "democratic processes in Kosovo do not fulfil democratic standards" (*ibid., para. 10*). This is consistent with the results of the 2011 Map of Freedom put out by Freedom House, which does not classify Kosovo as an electoral democracy.

It is in that context that the controversial results of the recently held elections by the ethnic-Albanian authorities in Pristina should be examined. As the report of the Secretary-General makes clear, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General "did not call the elections, which were not organized within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), and will not certify the results" (*ibid., para. 4*).

By all accounts, the election was deeply flawed, in spite of the presence of an average of 14 observers at each polling station, according to the report. Several re-votes and recounts were required. The European Parliament's election monitoring delegation to Kosovo stated, according to today's report, that "serious shortcomings underscored insufficient political will,

including at the grass-roots level, to conduct a genuine election in line with international standards and good electoral practices" (*ibid., para. 9*).

The report also references the overall conclusion of the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations: "a high number of irregularities during the Kosovo Assembly elections have severely affected the trust in the democratic process in Kosovo" *(ibid., para. 9)*. That is all the more regrettable given the higher standard of achievement in previous election cycles — that is to say, when they were conducted with the full support of all stakeholders and in line with resolution 1244 (1999). The report expresses concern that the security situation in Kosovo is potentially volatile and that the

> "number of murders, cases of unauthorized possession of weapons, and shooting incidents remained significant. Organized crime continued to be of concern throughout Kosovo, mainly involving smuggling and narcotics trafficking" (*ibid., para. 21*).

The report does not provide details, however. Nor does it focus on contemporary cases related to the smuggling of human organs. Only Annex I of the report mentions the multiple indictments handed down in the Medicus case, which is an alleged organized criminal conspiracy to source human organs for illicit transplant. Some of those who are suspected of involvement in this affair are also mentioned in a deeply disturbing report approved by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly on 25 January, entitled "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo". That report is based on a number of testimonial accounts and what are characterized as the compelling findings of a number of European intelligence and law enforcement agencies, together with analysis produced for NATO. It is particularly disturbing that, as far back as 1999, to quote from the report, "international actors chose to turn a blind eye to the war crimes of the KLA, placing a premium instead on achieving some degree of short-term stability". The report concludes by saying that "certain crimes committed by members of the KLA, including some top KLA leaders, were effectively concealed and have remained unpunished".

That report states that the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army Drenica Group engaged in money-laundering and the smuggling of drugs, cigarettes and weapons, as well as human trafficking, and that it bears primary responsibility for the fate of many hundreds of kidnapped civilians. The report goes on to state that the abductees were sent from Kosovo to secret detention camps in Northern Albania, where many of them were singled out for forced surgery before being murdered. Their internal organs were extracted and sold on the international black market. The report indicates that those events took place before, during and after the 1999 armed conflict in Kosovo.

The report explicitly identifies Hashim Thaci, Kosovo's sitting prime minister, as the group's leader, and lists a number of prominent personalities, including Xhavit Haliti, Azem Syla and Fatmir Limaj, as having "played vital roles as co-conspirators in various categories of criminal activity". It also identifies one of Hashim Thaci's current close advisors, Shaip Muja, as a leading co-conspirator in the trafficking of human organs.

For justice to be done, a full and independent criminal investigation of the reported allegations is essential. Such an investigation must be internationally mandated as well as internationally accountable. It must also be able to provide an effective witness protection and relocation programme to guarantee credible testimony by all. This is an acute problem in Kosovo, for, as the report authors highlighted, "fear, often to the point of genuine terror" was observed "in some of our informants as soon as the subject of our inquiry was broached".

No existing institution on its own has the mandate or the temporal and territorial jurisdiction to carry out a serious investigation that would be comprehensive in scope. This includes EULEX.

I want to be clear on the following point: the contribution of EULEX to uncovering what took place inside Kosovo itself will be crucial. That alone will not be sufficient, however, because EULEX cannot operate outside Kosovo, while the relevant allegations appear to encompass not only that territory, but various United Nations Member States in Europe, Asia and Africa. A single authority must ultimately coordinate the investigation process, manage the jurisdictional issues and ensure the proper administration of justice.

It is the position of the Republic of Serbia that the solution lies in establishing an ad hoc investigating mechanism created by and accountable to the Security Council. This has been the case in all previous

instances involving war crimes in the Balkans, whichever side the perpetrators belonged to and irrespective of their political role. It is only through the action of the Security Council that we can prevent the onset of a perception of double standards in the administration of international justice. Maintaining a coherent approach on the issue of war crimes is an essential component in the common effort to consolidate peace and stability in the Balkans.

The final words of the Council of Europe report state that its sole aim today is to act on behalf of those men and women who, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, simply aspire to the truth and to an end to scandalous impunity, with no greater wish than to be able to live in peace. That statement serves to frame what Serbia asks of the Security Council — to ascertain the veracity of the allegations outlined in the report and, should the evidence warrant it, bring all the culprits to justice. We do not expect the discussion in this Chamber to be concluded this afternoon. In our view, today is the start of a shared effort to reach a consensus on how to decisively address these heinous contentions. Serbia intends to actively participate in this process.

I want to make it clear that for us, the question of human organs trafficking is an ethical and human rights issue of the first order. We have to make sure it is not portrayed as an attempt to assign communal blame. There is no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt, like innocence, is not collective, but personal.

We believe that the imperative to conduct a proper investigation must neither be politicized, nor linked to diplomatic disagreements over Kosovo. It must be ultimately put in the service of truth and reconciliation. Its successful completion is a prerequisite for lasting peace and will represent the final repudiation of the policies that promoted extrajudicial killing, ethnic cleansing and the criminalization of a society.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Mrs. Çitaku: Let me initially express gratitude to the Council for giving me the opportunity to inform the Council firsthand about developments in the last three months in the Republic of Kosovo, as well as provide the Council with the observations of the government of the Republic of Kosovo regarding current political developments. I wish to congratulate, in alphabetical order, the new Security Council members: Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal and South Africa.

I am addressing the Council today in this very distinguished room, where history has unfolded and where nations are protected, on the eve of the third anniversary of the declaration of independence of Kosovo, an event that marked the birth of a new country in the European continent. I thank the members of the Council, the Secretary-General of the Organization and all his successive Special Representatives, including Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for the role they have played in helping our region achieve long-lasting peace by strengthening the democratic and multiethnic institutions of a free and democratic Kosovo.

It is a suitable moment to remind ourselves where we are today, three years after the democratically elected representatives of the people of Kosovo came together to fulfil the will of the people and declare independence. Since that day, three years ago, the Kosovo Government has implemented the critical provisions of the Ahtisaari Plan, the comprehensive proposal of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, in full accordance with the established international law and Security Council resolutions, as was determined by the landmark advisory opinion on the legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence, issued in July 2010 by the International Court of Justice at the request of Serbia.

This was a giant final step in the long and torturous process of defining Kosovo's final status, and it came not a moment too soon, for it has not been easy at all to be living in Kosovo in the last few decades. We should never forget that Milošević first began his campaign of terror in Kosovo in 1989, and it is in Kosovo that he ended, in the most tragic way imaginable, his plan for a greater Serbia, taking the lives of thousands of innocent people. This is now an established historical fact, as the world has witnessed and as finally documented in the verdicts of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, making us, the people of Kosovo, the subject of quintessentially unjust rule for decades.

All oppressed people and nations around the globe know what the feeling of liberation, freedom and

dignity is. Just to mention one prominent and exemplary case, the people of South Africa know what the feeling of freedom is, after apartheid. Therefore it is easy to understand how we Kosovars were suffering in those years and how we feel nowadays.

I am speaking here on behalf of the Kosovo government, as we have always done here, in an open, frank and transparent way. We have experienced challenging times during the last couple of months. As you may recall, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that the former president, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu, was in breach of the country's Constitution, which made him promptly resign, in full respect of the procedures in place. This development affected the political equilibrium and led to early elections.

Candidates for ministers of Parliament engaged in a lively electoral campaign, sometimes at the edge of fair play. Notwithstanding attacks against election officials in the north of Kosovo, international monitors reported a calm and remarkably peaceful campaign and voting day. Furthermore, over 200 complaints were submitted to elections bodies by all political parties and civil society organizations, and those were addressed in record time. Revotes were ordered in several municipalities, including a manual recounting of suspected ballot boxes where needed. All procedural and legal steps were lawfully followed and respected, in a system of checks and balances, in order to make sure that complaints were properly addressed and the will of the people respected. It is of paramount importance to point out that throughout the entire process, the system functioned: the state delivered its services and the appropriate budgetary procedures of a caretaker government were strictly observed.

We political representatives and leaders of Kosovo have very attentively listened to and taken due note of all critiques and suggestions made by our friends and partner regarding the electoral process. This represents an important moment of thoughtful reflection in our endeavours to strengthen our institutions and democracy. Above all, it should be stressed that the citizens of Kosovo are firmly establishing themselves as an energetic, stable and forward-looking society where individual freedoms are respected and institutions function in the interest of all the citizens of Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic or religious background.

At the end of the process, all political parties in Kosovo have accepted the final results. Yesterday, an agreement to form a new Government was reached among several political parties, including representatives of the minorities, providing the institutions of Kosovo with full political and legal clout.

Another issue was current in the media during the reporting period, which I would like to address clearly. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recently approved a report written by a Swiss parliamentarian, Mr. Dick Marty, alleging that senior political leaders of Kosovo — but not only of Kosovo — had engaged in organ harvesting. Free with its imagination but failing to provide any proof whatsoever, the Marty report further claims that senior NATO, European Union (EU) member States and United States officials had knowledge of and tolerated this alleged wrongdoing.

Appalled, the Government of Kosovo has clearly and firmly rejected the allegations in Mr. Marty's report. Besides profoundly hurting the feelings of every Kosovar, the report has also, regrettably, harmed our international reputation. It is worth recalling that the allegations in the report are not new. They have already been subject to international investigation, in particular by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and, most recently, by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). We welcome the input of international experts, such as recent statements by former ICTY Chief Prosecutor Sir Geoffrey Nice, that question the legal arguments put forth by Mr. Marty.

That being said, the Government of Kosovo wishes to reaffirm its official stance that, in the light of the severity of the allegations, it will insist on a prompt launch of a thorough investigation by EULEX prosecutors on the ground. EULEX, entrusted by the United Nations and the EU to support the local judicial system, has the expertise, the resources, the prosecutors and the judges to thoroughly investigate the allegations put forth. We will give it our full cooperation.

But no mistake should be made and no confusion should be tolerated. The war in Kosovo did not happen centuries ago. It happened 11 years ago, before the eyes of the whole world. No report can change or

reconstruct artificially a well-known and clearly documented situation between oppressor and oppressed. Blurring that distinction does not correspond to reality; it does not help truth; it does not serve the process of justice and reconciliation. The people of Kosovo, more than anyone, need and demand investigations since we have nothing to hide. The same clear, firm and unambiguous stance has been expressed by the Government of Albania.

With regard to the integration of minorities into Kosovo's society and institutions, we are happy to report significant progress during the reporting period. A substantial number of Serb voters participated in the national elections. There was, for the first time, a much higher participation of the Serb community in elections organized by the Kosovo authorities than in those organized by the Serb illegal structures. The Serbs won over 10 per cent of all parliamentary seats, becoming an essential part of the Government. The minority communities won 25 seats, or over 20 per cent of the seats in Parliament. For the first time in Kosovo's young democratic history, a Serb politician will soon become a Deputy Prime Minister.

The success of decentralization and the acceptance by the majority community of the constitutional mechanisms that protect minorities represent a success that cannot be disputed. New municipalities have been established and, with the help of the international community, are being equipped to serve their inhabitants with the newly decentralized powers.

The Republic of Kosovo is in the process of organizing the first population census since 1981, with the help of the international community and the support of Eurostat. The census will take place in April. It is fundamentally important that we see the positive trend of Serb participation in local institutions continue and become active in the forthcoming census. Special provisions and additional questionnaires have been developed with the help of Eurostat to account for Kosovar refugees from all communities who no longer reside in Kosovo. We urge the international community to call for the full participation of the Serb community in the process. This is especially important in northern Mitrovica, where we need to see legal and authoritative bodies emerge out of democratic processes, with institutions that operate within the framework of the Kosovo Government.

Back in 2005, during months of talks in Vienna, good will provided unprecedented local authority for the Serb minority. They are now using these rights in all of Kosovo, except in northern Mitrovica, where the political landscape has become a hostage to parallel structures that are involved, as is widely known and recognized, in crime and smuggling. According to United Nations estimates, we are losing at least €40 million annually due to illegal smuggling across border crossings 31 and 1. We expect Serbia to honour its pledge to fight crime and corruption by assisting EULEX and the Government of Kosovo in re-establishing the same principle of integrated tax collection operations in effect at Kosovo's other border points with Serbia and its neighbours.

While we have taken note of the concerns expressed by Special Representative Zannier regarding the position of United Nations administration in Mitrovica, we would like to remind everyone that Kosovo taxpayers, through the Government of Kosovo, currently pay well over 50 per cent of the entire United Nations operational budget in Mitrovica, contributing greatly to the United Nations presence on the ground and acting as an important supporting pillar. We are also insistent that the current status-neutral position of the United Nations means exactly what it says — that the United Nations does not exclude the right of Kosovo to be called and recognized as a State. Sometimes, this point is not clear on the ground.

I have an appeal to make to the Republic of Serbia today. It is not what it would have normally been if Serbia were mature enough to make the grand gesture of complying with reality and recognizing Kosovo, thereby ensuring the opening of a new chapter in the Balkans. It is a much more modest appeal for Serbia to respect the very framework under which Kosovo operates as a State, including the Security Council's resolutions.

For example, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo has licensed two operators of mobile phone services under the 2004 United Nations-promulgated law on telecommunications. Any other operations run by Serbian authorities are hence illegal under international law. Serbia's insistence on keeping mobile operations in Kosovo is in blatant disregard of resolution 1244 (1999).

Similarly, Kosovar authorities have the inherent authority to issue automobile license plates in the cities

of Kosovo. The Serbian authorities have not had that right since 1999. Serbia simply cannot hope to continue issuing, hundreds of miles away in Belgrade, plates for vehicles in Kosovo's cities.

In the case of airspace, the Kumanovo Agreement and subsequent decisions of the United Nations and EU airspace regulatory bodies have given Kosovo full rights of control over its airspace. All of Kosovo's neighbours, barring Serbia, and all international airlines accept that fact. Serbia continues to ban flights originating in Kosovo from entering Serbian airspace, again disregarding the majority of the main points of resolution 1244 (1999) and the International Court of Justice opinion.

There are many other points of discussion ahead of us, for which we need the Serbian Government to adopt a new and realistic approach. It must recognize the basic truth that Kosovo is in fact a nation separate from Serbia. It needs to establish many modes of communication with Kosovo, as an equal partner, to uncover the truth about the missing of the war and to address such issues as the fight against crime, the provision of health care, education, sports, culture and heritage. The Government of Kosovo looks forward to engaging in meaningful talks with the Government of Serbia in the immediate future on all of those important issues, with the facilitation of the European Union.

The security situation in Kosovo is stable. As a result of the steadily improving security situation, the Kosovo Force has pursued its plan to reduce troop levels, which will drop to a low of 5,000. When we remember 1999 and the massive military-humanitarian operation that involved over 70,000 international troops and civilian personnel, we realize how far we have come in turning Kosovo into a success story for the United Nations and the international community.

Although Kosovo was confronted with the task of having to prove the solidity of its institutions in overcoming a political crisis and organizing early elections, I am pleased to reiterate that it has not affected the continuing international recognition of Kosovo as an equal member of the community of nations. Since my most recent report, five other States Members of the United Nations have recognized Kosovo as an independent and sovereign State. I take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Kiribati, Tuvalu, Qatar, Guinea-Bissau and Oman. This only proves that the process is irreversible and remains the only legal and politically sustainable way for all of us to move forward with our agenda of development and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Being so preoccupied with the bad news, we sometimes forget that life continues in Kosovo and the Balkans. We are no longer concerned with issues of life and death, but rather with the more prosaic problems typical of a society in transition. In fact, our reports to international stakeholders are increasingly about issues of true importance, such as electing better leaders, having a free media, stopping corruption, fighting organized crime and securing a social support network for the neediest, and less about status and borders. Therein lies the opportunity before us. Both Serbia and Kosovo want to become members of the EU. We must do so because our peoples are asking that of us.

The process of establishing clear, transparent and measurable benchmarks for progress in internal reforms and neighbourly relations will drive the dialogue between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Kosovo. We have already seen the necessary adjustment when the Government of Serbia submitted the new text of General Assembly resolution 64/298 accepting the opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Kosovar Government will competently and credibly advance our EU agenda and deliver on the promises we made in the election campaign. We expect the Serbian Government to take the necessary final step and accept Kosovo as a partner on an equal footing.

The upcoming dialogue affords Kosovo and Serbia a unique opportunity. We in Kosovo see that dialogue not as an end goal, but as an instrument to establish a new foundation in the region. We cannot and will not change history; it is unfolding. We cannot and should not forget or erase the past, but perhaps we can learn a lesson from it on what should never happen again. We cannot change our geography. Kosovo and Serbia will be living next to each other as immediate neighbours for eternity. But we can change the future and the legacy we will leave behind for our children. It is in our hands now to make sure that they inherit from us a peaceful and prosperous region. That will require commitment and leadership in both countries. I am here to assure the Security Council that Kosovo is ready.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Zannier for his briefing. I would also like to welcome the Serbian Foreign Minister, Mr. Vuk Jeremič, and thank him for his statement. My thanks also go to Ms. Vlora Çitaku for her statement.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation among the parties concerned. We urge UNMIK to pursue its efforts to maintain security and stability, facilitate Kosovo's participation in regional and international forums, and assist in responding to the social needs of the different groups, particularly in the north, in coordination and cooperation with local and international parties.

On the basis of the Mission's constructive role, we urge all parties to extend to UNMIK the support it needs to implement its mandate. We also urge them not to publish inaccurate information on the Mission's activities, which only obstructs its work and jeopardizes the safety of its staff. We also welcome the continuing coordination between UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, pursuant to the principle of neutrality set forth in resolution 1244 (1999).

We welcome the relatively calm security situation, but persistent efforts must be made to combat organized crime, which, according to the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/43), continues to be a source of concern in different parts of Kosovo.

The situation in the north of the country is also still fragile. Harassment and security incidents continue to foster a climate of tension and mistrust among various groups. In those circumstances, it is important for security forces to provide the maximum level of security for all citizens of all regions. All parties must refrain from provocative acts that could disturb the peaceful coexistence.

Security, trust and respect for diversity are the basic elements needed in addressing the issue of refugees. Ensuring those conditions would create a positive climate that would in turn pave the way for dignified and safe returns. While returns increased in 2010, the rate is still low.

On a different issue, we would like to express our regret about the irregularities in the recent parliamentary elections, which affected the confidence in the democratic process in Kosovo, despite the partial redress of those irregularities by the re-vote in a number of polling stations. The increased percentage of Kosovo Serbs residing south of the Ibar river who participated in those elections represented an important positive development.

At this stage, it is important to focus on forming a Government that reflects the aspirations of the population and can improve its standard of living. We also hope that the momentum of General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010, will serve to facilitate a truly frank and constructive dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina as soon as possible. It must be accompanied by efforts to achieve reconciliation and to establish confidence among the parties in Kosovo, allowing them to feel the benefits of such a proposed dialogue.

Meanwhile, we would like to pay tribute to the current cooperation of the Serbian Government and the Kosovo authorities with the Reconstruction Implementation Commission to protect Serbian Orthodox sites. In that regard, we agree with the Secretary-General regarding the significant and effective role that the religious authorities can play in reducing tension and in building bridges among groups in a way that would protect such sites and strengthen reconciliation.

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution on the report of Special Rapporteur Dick Marty on the inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. We hope that appropriate legal means can be found to establish the truth, devoid of politicization, in a way that meets the expectations of Kosovars and achieves justice for the families of those victims.

Looking beyond such incidents, we affirm the importance of fighting corruption and of transparency and accountability as the main pillars in building stable institutions and lasting peace.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa wishes to welcome Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, back to the Security Council and to thank him for his briefing on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We also welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Foreign

Minister of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, and thank them for their statements.

According to resolution 1244 (1999), part of UNMIK's mandate is to promote security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo, in coordination with the leadership in both Belgrade and Pristina. Those are important aspects of UNMIK's mandate, which my delegation strongly supports. An integral part of implementing that mandate towards securing sustainable security and durable peace in Kosovo is the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation between the two sides.

South Africa urges both sides to commence to resolve outstanding issues with direct constructive dialogue, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 64/298. Furthermore, we consider it critical to continue with the implementation of UNMIK's mandated activities aimed at promoting reconciliation, such as addressing the issue of missing persons, the return of displaced persons and the protection of religious and cultural heritage sites.

My delegation is concerned about the attacks against UNMIK reported in the media in Kosovo and all attacks aimed at undermining the legitimacy of UNMIK as mandated by the Security Council. We urge parties to continue supporting UNMIK in the implementation of its mandate.

South Africa continues to be concerned that the current political impasse undermines peace and stability in the region, thus further undermining the full potential for sustainable development and regional integration. Since dialogue is essential to the peaceful resolution of the crisis, it is important for Belgrade and Pristina to start full-fledged dialogue on outstanding matters between them to achieve a sustainable solution to the situation in the Western Balkans.

My delegation therefore calls on the authorities in Pristina to exert all efforts to reach a political solution that will allow them to start the dialogue process. We also call on both sides to start such talks in good faith and be willing to listen and to compromise, with the aim of reaching agreement.

The need to address issues of direct concern to the population in Kosovo has an impact on reconciliation. In that regard, we are pleased to note the progress made in the return of displaced persons, but continue to be concerned about the lack of resources to deal with the forced returns in Kosovo. More work needs to be done to address the challenges currently faced.

In addition, we welcome the limited progress in the Working Group on Missing Persons, and have noted the call by Serbian and Kosovo Albanian families for the Working Group to hold joint briefing sessions. In our view, such briefings would continue to contribute towards establishing direct contact between the various communities, especially the Serbian and Albanian communities, which, we believe, directly contributes to reconciliation efforts. Another example of progress relating to reconciliation is the work done by the Reconstruction Implementation Commission on the reconstruction of religious and heritage sights.

The fragile progress towards stability is also undermined by the continued volatile situation in Northern Kosovo/Mitrovica. It is essential that the Security Council-mandated mission be respected throughout Kosovo and that its authority not be undermined. All sides must also refrain from any acts of provocation and must respect the international presence throughout Kosovo.

Furthermore, South Africa is concerned that the limited progress in reconciliation could also be unravelled by the disturbing allegations of organ smuggling against several leading political figures in Kosovo. Those allegations need to be fully and properly investigated, and South Africa is of the view that an appropriate international response aimed at ending impunity must be found.

It is clear that much work remains to be done in Kosovo. We remain ready to work with the Council to ensure that UNMIK's mandate is fully implemented.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and of Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, the representative of Kosovo, who have come to the Council with important statements that merit our full attention and consideration. I also appreciate the comprehensive briefing presented by Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, which attests to the importance of the mandate and the significant contribution of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in promoting security, stability and respect for human

rights in that country in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Colombia has followed with interest the recent election and institution-building activities in Kosovo. We believe that effective democracy is essential to strengthening governance, generating citizen trust and promoting an atmosphere of greater harmony among Kosovars of all ethnicities, as well as to the continued improvement in relations with the countries of the region.

We share the concerns with regard to the impact that events surrounding the elections on 12 December 2010, referred to in the report (S/2011/43) of the Secretary-General, could have on the evolution of the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Colombia hopes that the firm commitment expressed by both sides is reflected in concrete steps by taking advantage of the European Union's readiness to facilitate the process, which the General Assembly welcomed last September in its resolution 64/298.

That regional support could help bring together Pristina and Belgrade and provide broader perspectives for addressing issues and differences between the two countries, taking into account the experience and participation of regional organizations' in the stabilization process of Kosovo in support of UNMIK' mandate.

Yesterday we had an opportunity to listen to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania (see S/PV.6481), who in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe referred to some of his organization's contributions in Kosovo. Likewise, the Secretary-General's report and Mr. Zannier's briefing have highlighted UNMIK's cooperation and coordination with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and with NATO's International Security Force. In that context, it is appropriate for the Security Council to decisively support the process of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade while also continuing to promote efforts to encourage an environment of political, social and multicultural stability throughout Kosovo.

The Secretary-General's report refers to the recurrence of incidents and tension of ethnic nature, especially in Northern Kosovo. It is imperative to ensure adequate respect and coordination by Kosovo's authorities with regard to UNMIK's competencies throughout the entire territory, including the northern area of the country. In addition, strategies that foster increased contacts and exchanges among the different communities should be agreed upon. The positive experiences with regard to interreligious dialogue and the reconstruction and preservation of cultural heritage on the ground in Kosovo are avenues that should be further explored towards more harmonious coexistence.

Colombia considers very serious the references to the possible commission of war crimes related to illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. The Security Council should evaluate this issue against the backdrop of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the value of justice in the promotion of peace, and then determine the course to be pursued.

Colombia supports the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo aimed at consolidating an enabling political, social and economic environment in the country that leads to definitive peace and stability in the Balkans.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zannier for his briefing. I also welcome the presence among us today of Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. I have listened very carefully to his statement, as well as that by Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Currently, the overall situation in Kosovo is calm. However, it remains complex and fragile. We are concerned about the inter-communal tensions that exist in Kosovo.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. We have always been of the opinion that the question of Kosovo touches on peace and stability in the Balkans, and in fact in the whole of Europe. It is therefore up to the parties concerned, within the framework of the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council, to find a negotiated solution that is acceptable to both parties. China encourages the beginning of dialogue between the various parties with a view to finding an appropriate solution to the outstanding issues.

Resolution 1244 (1999) remains valid and continues to be an important legal instrument to resolve the issue of Kosovo. China supports the continued work of the United Nations Interim

Administration Mission in Kosovo in line with the mandate conferred upon it by the Security Council. We call for a greater role for it in solving the problems in Kosovo. All parties concerned must ensure the security of UNMIK staff and facilitate their work under optimal conditions.

China is extremely concerned about the illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43). Any violations of international law and international humanitarian law are intolerable. China understands the reasonable concerns of Serbia and supports the opening of a United Nations inquiry into this matter.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): On behalf of the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2011/43) on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK). We also commend Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Kosovo, for his briefing on recent developments in Kosovo, as well as the staff of UNMIK for their efforts.

We welcome the participation in today's meeting of His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, as well as Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

Bosnia and Herzegovina commends UNMIK, operating within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) in its role of maintaining peace, security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. We appreciate UNMIK's efforts in encouraging the process of reconciliation and the facilitation of constructive dialogue and regional cooperation, as well as its focus on mediation between the communities and its support to minority communities.

During the reporting period, political developments in Kosovo, in particular the extraordinary elections of 12 December and their aftermath, have slowed down the momentum generated by General resolution 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010, which welcomed the readiness of the European Union to facilitate a dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. We regret that UNMIK was excluded from the Assembly elections process and could not certify the results. We also note that the elections were held in a peaceful atmosphere and did not provoke additional tensions among the population. In that regard, we believe that it is important that all stakeholders maintain their positive and constructive approach towards dialogue in order to address and resolve longstanding issues, which would contribute significantly to the consolidation of peace, stability and reconciliation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to express its strong concerns regarding the allegations contained in the report of Special Rapporteur Dick Marty entitled "Inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo". Furthermore, we welcome the willingness of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to consider any evidence that the Special Rapporteur may have uncovered and to provide its full support to any future investigation that may be conducted into the allegations.

We have taken note of the fact that the security situation in Kosovo has remained relatively calm, in spite of some incidents, mainly in northern Kosovo, where the situation continues to be sensitive and politically delicate, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. In the context of improving inter-community dialogue and building confidence among the parties, we are encouraged by the latest developments in the five recently decentralized Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities, which have implemented capital projects at a cost of €1 million each, received from the Pristina budget, mainly for investments in roads, water, sanitation and other local infrastructure projects.

Although the number of voluntary minority returns remains low, we are encouraged by the fact that there has been an increase in returns as compared to the previous year. In addition, while stressing the importance of providing conditions conducive to sustainable returns, we welcome UNMIK's efforts to decrease tensions and draw attention to common needs. Furthermore, during the reporting period, UNMIK and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees facilitated several "go-and-see" and "go-and-inform" visits, which gave an opportunity to displaced persons to visit their properties and make first-hand assessments of conditions in the receiving community.

With regard to the rule of law, we reiterate our support for the activities of UNMIK and EULEX, operating within the status-neutral framework of the United Nations. We also support the existing practice of cooperation and coordination between UNMIK,

EULEX, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO — the latter present through the troops of the Kosovo Force — and we hope that this practice will continue.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our long-standing position that stability and security in Kosovo are significant for achieving lasting peace and prosperity in our region. We believe that the international community should continue to play an important role in supporting the aspirations of the countries of the region towards integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, respectively.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Foreign Minister Jeremić and Acting Foreign Minister Çitaku to the Council and thank them for their comments. I would also like to thank Special Representative Zannier for his comprehensive briefing today.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Kosovo on the third anniversary of their independence tomorrow, 17 February. In these three years, Kosovo has demonstrated a commitment to developing democratic institutions and to playing a responsible role in the neighbourhood and in the wider international community.

Let me also take a moment to congratulate the people of Serbia on the celebration of their national day on 15 February. Serbia too has demonstrated a commitment to peace and stability in the Balkans.

The United States supports the aspirations of both countries to achieve lasting peace and prosperity and to complete their European integration. To this end, we look forward to the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, aimed at improving the quality of life for their citizens and supporting both countries as they make progress on their respective paths to membership in the European Union.

I would like to make three additional points. First, in its three years of independence, Kosovo has made substantial progress in building its democracy. It administered municipal elections in 2009 and snap National Assembly elections at the end of last year. The implementation of decentralization has moved government closer to the people and Kosovo has established new Serb-majority municipalities that have fostered improved political engagement in minority communities. We note, however, that serious irregularities occurred in some areas during the December parliamentary elections. That said, Kosovo's electoral and judicial institutions responded immediately and appropriately to hold orderly re-votes. Kosovo Serbs south of the Ibar River turned out in record numbers during the December elections. This is a welcome sign of the benefits of decentralization and of the improved security and political situation in Kosovo. Still, significant work remains to strengthen the electoral system, and we join international partners' calls for further electoral reforms. These and other pressing reforms await the new Assembly and Government in the coming days.

The story is not as encouraging in northern Kosovo. The ethnic-Serb community's engagement in Kosovo politics and municipal administration is a critical element for the development of a prosperous multi-ethnic democracy. We are concerned that Serbs in northern Kosovo who have engaged with Kosovo Government institutions have faced organized opposition from parallel institutions, which use violence and intimidation to prevent the democracy and development that has taken root in Serb communities throughout the rest of Kosovo. It is also alarming that, as cited in the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/43), the targeting of international workers in northern Kosovo has increased.

Secondly, the rule of law is paramount to stability and progress in the Balkans. The United States takes any allegations of criminal wrongdoing seriously, especially with regard to war crimes. We therefore take the allegations contained in the Council of Europe report seriously — allegations that had previously been investigated by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We fully support the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) leading a comprehensive, thorough and impartial follow-on investigation. EULEX has a jurisdiction and mandate to deal with war crimes. It has dealt with similar issues in the past and it will have the full weight of the European Union and its partners to support it. We welcome the declared support of the Governments of Kosovo and Albania for such an investigation. We do not believe that an ad hoc United Nations mechanism is necessary or appropriate in the light of the EULEX mandate.

This brings me to my third point. The process of reconciliation must continue in order to maintain peace and stability in the Balkans. We were encouraged that voluntary returns increased in 2010, with nearly twice as many Kosovo Serbs returning as compared to 2009. We would also note that NATO's Kosovo Force continues to transfer protective responsibilities for Serbian Orthodox properties to the Kosovo police without incident. The protection, and support for, the religious and cultural heritage of all of Kosovo's communities is critical to reconciliation efforts. We commend UNMIK's efforts to facilitate the work of the Reconstruction Implementation Commission. We also welcome the efforts of the European Union facilitator for the protection of religious and cultural heritage and call on other members to aid in these and similar efforts. The United States recently allocated $1.4 million for cultural preservation and restoration projects throughout Kosovo.

Let me reiterate the commitment of the United States to a stable, prosperous and democratic Kosovo that enjoys genuine cooperation with Serbia and the Balkan region.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, for their presence here today and for the statements they delivered. I also welcome Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and commend the work he and the entire staff of his Mission are carrying out in Kosovo.

Tomorrow, Kosovo will celebrate the third anniversary of its independence. What assessment can be made of the development of this young State? First of all, everyone must agree that the fear that chaos would ensue, expressed by some at the time of the declaration of independence, was unfounded. The institutional framework that Kosovo set out for itself is being respected by its authorities and supported by its population. Legislative elections were held in December. They went well overall — better than in many other countries that are older than Kosovo.

As the Secretary-General noted in his report (S/2011/43), the level of participation by Kosovar Serbs in those elections was the highest since 2001. The Security Council has every reason to congratulate itself for this. Whatever our positions are on the question of status, this high participation rate proves the greater maturity on the part of the population and shows their willingness to share a common future.

To date, 75 States have recognized Kosovo. Each recognition brings greater stability to Kosovo and to the entire region. But these recognitions are not enough. Kosovo must indeed still make progress in many areas. The rule of law must be strengthened, and this must be accomplished through a strengthening of institutions and of the fight against corruption and organized crime. Judicial institutions must be consolidated.

In his report, the Secretary-General characterizes the security situation as relatively calm but potentially volatile. While incidents are, thankfully, less frequent than they were a few years ago, there are still too many of them. It is unacceptable that vehicles driven by Serbs are the target of rock-throwing, even if these attacks are essentially symbolic.

Moreover, the actions of Serb extremists in the north of Kosovo are equally unacceptable. Acts of intimidation and pressure by these extremists directed against the Serbs in the north of Kosovo and aimed at preventing them from living on good terms with all of the communities must not be tolerated. The experience of Serbs living south of the Ibar River, in particular in the new municipalities created under the Ahtisaari plan, shows that peaceful coexistence is possible.

A process of dialogue must be established soon between the two neighbouring States. The European Union is ready to facilitate this dialogue, which we hope to see begin as soon as the Government of Kosovo is formed. For this dialogue, which will have to do with technical subjects of common interest, to be fruitful and bring about concrete results for the population, it must take place without interference by one country in the territory of the other.

All of the States of the former Yugoslavia have been granted the same chance at achieving European integration. Each one is making progress at its own pace in this process of European rapprochement. One of these States has already joined the European Union.

However, the horrors of the war years remain ever-present for the populations concerned. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has carried out exemplary work and has ensured that justice is done. Two accused remain to be arrested as soon as possible to answer for their actions.

A disturbing report adopted recently by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe included allegations — presented in the hypothetical — of organ trafficking that allegedly took place in Kosovo and Albania at the end of the war. An inquiry carried out several years ago on the basis of the same rumours failed to confirm those rumours. We would like for light to be definitively shed on this matter and for the proof, if it exists — and until now it has not been presented — to be provided to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which has the mandate and capacity to successfully carry out the necessary investigations.

A new Government will take office in Kosovo. It must spare no effort in helping the young State continue to make progress. Many different tasks will have to be tackled at once: the rule of law, good governance, the fight against corruption, inter-community dialogue, economic reconstruction, dialogue with Serbia and the strengthening of its international relations.

For its part, France will continue to closely follow the situation in Kosovo and will help it come into line with European norms, as we are also doing today with Serbia.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to start by welcoming the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lamberto Zannier; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić; and the Acting Foreign Minister of Kosovo, Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, to the Council Chamber today.

I would also like to express the United Kingdom's gratitude for the role played by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in promoting stability and reconciliation in Kosovo and for Mr. Zannier's continued leadership and hard work.

Kosovo has now achieved 75 recognitions, held its first national election since independence and tomorrow will celebrate its third anniversary as an independent State. I congratulate Kosovo on these achievements.

The national elections in December in Kosovo were widely recognized to have been conducted in a peaceful and stable manner. There were a number of irregularities and allegations of fraud. Acting Foreign Minister Çitaku has herself recognized this. But the efficient and responsible manner with which the Central Elections Commission and the Constitutional Court addressed these complaints, in line with the electoral code, is a further sign of Kosovo's maturing democracy.

The results have now been confirmed by the Central Elections Commission. We welcome the increased participation by the Kosovo Serbian population. This is reflected in the fact that there will be 25 minority members of Parliament in the Kosovo Assembly, which is five above the 20 seats reserved. The United Kingdom looks forward to supporting the incoming Kosovo Government.

Three years after Kosovo's declaration of independence, the challenges it faces are changing. Increasingly, they are the same as those of other States in the region: to foster economic development, to improve the lives of its citizens and to drive forward reform in pursuit of European standards. The new Government should seize the opportunity to address these challenges and commit itself to the task of preparing for European Union (EU) membership.

In September, the General Assembly welcomed the prospect of an EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. All parties are committed to starting the dialogue as soon as possible. Like the Secretary-General, I am pleased that the European Union representatives appointed to facilitate the talks have held preparatory meetings with both sides. My Government continues to believe that the dialogue is essential to improving practical cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo and for making progress towards both countries' European perspective. I urge both sides to engage quickly, in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

Some cooperation is already taking place. The Secretary-General rightly highlights the good work that is being taken forward on issues such as missing persons and religious and cultural heritage. I would like to thank UNMIK and the International Committee of the Red Cross for their role in this. The United Kingdom has long supported the work of the United Nations and the Government of Kosovo to ensure that returnees feel able to go home. So I am particularly pleased to see that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has recorded an

increase in the number of voluntary minority returns, with the 2010 figures almost double those of 2009.

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a report by Special Rapporteur Dick Marty on inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. The United Kingdom Government expects allegations such as these to be treated seriously. I therefore welcome the decision by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) to open preliminary investigations into the allegations, and the public commitment by the Governments of Kosovo and Albania to cooperate fully with the investigation.

EULEX has the mandate, authority and jurisdiction to take forward a full and independent investigation. In the light of this, we do not believe that a Security Council-mandated investigation into these allegations is necessary.

Progress in Kosovo is irreversible. The world's youngest country is a viable, independent State with a clear future in the European Union. But that future belongs not just to Kosovo, but also to Serbia and the other countries of the Western Balkans. The United Kingdom supports all of them.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I would like to join my colleagues in warmly welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, and the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo, Mrs. Vlora Çitaku. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier for his briefing. We appreciate the contribution made by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and commend the dedication and service of its staff.

Tomorrow, Kosovo will celebrate the third anniversary of its independence. We congratulate the people and leadership of Kosovo for the progress that has been achieved over the past three years. We will continue our support for a free, multi-ethnic, democratic and dynamic Kosovo, whose future lies in Europe.

We welcome the most recent recognitions of Kosovo as an independent State, bringing the total number of recognitions to 75. Germany sees those recognitions as a clear sign that the region has gained stability since Kosovo's independence. We call upon States that have not yet done so to recognize the Republic of Kosovo, as a contribution to peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

Our common goal in the region is very clear. We want peace and stability, freedom, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The prospect of European Union (EU) membership has facilitated peace and reconciliation. One day, all countries in the region, as well as Serbia and Kosovo, should find their place under a common European roof.

Germany commends and fully supports the efforts of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, Baroness Catherine Ashton, and her representatives to facilitate a process of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, as supported by General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted in September 2010. We welcome the fact that both parties are ready for that dialogue and we hope that, after some delays, it will now start quickly and in a constructive spirit.

We echo the Secretary-General in welcoming the peaceful conduct of the recent parliamentary elections in Kosovo. We view the increased overall turnout and the good participation by Kosovo Serbs and other communities as a positive sign of the wish of all of Kosovo's citizens to jointly participate in building a sustainable, multi-ethnic future.

We regret that a number of irregularities marred the voting and counting processes. However, we welcome the fact that the competent institutions in Kosovo addressed the irregularities in an efficient and responsible manner, in line with the existing legal framework in Kosovo. All unlawful acts related to the elections have to be investigated and prosecuted so as to further strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the democratic process in Kosovo.

We hope for the speedy formation of a new Government and the election of the new President of the Republic. The new Government will face a number of important challenges, such as addressing the pressing need for socio-economic development, strengthening the rule of law throughout Kosovo and combating corruption and organized crime. The full integration of representatives of the ethnic communities in institutions and society, especially the Kosovo Serbs, and the protection of their religious and cultural sites will also have to be addressed.

As the report (S/2011/43) of the Secretary-General underlines, many challenges remain in northern Kosovo. Although the overall security situation in Kosovo has remained relatively calm, it continues to be potentially volatile in the north.

We welcome the continued close cooperation between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Kosovo Force. We fully support the important work of EULEX and are pleased that it has extended its presence and activities in the north of Kosovo so as to guarantee the implementation of its mandate throughout the territory of Kosovo.

The grave allegations of crimes committed against Serbian nationals during and after the end of the armed conflict in Kosovo, as described by the Special Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Dick Marty, are shocking. Germany takes them seriously. Those allegations must be investigated fully and impartially. We call on all relevant organizations, institutions and individuals to come forward and present any evidence they have to allow for a full investigation. We welcome the fact that the Government of Kosovo and the Government of Albania are prepared to fully cooperate in the full and impartial investigation into the allegations made by the Special Rapporteur.

EULEX has the necessary capacities, competence and, above all, jurisdiction to carry out those investigations. EULEX has our full support and confidence. From our point of view, the setting up of an ad hoc body or tribunal by the Security Council would not serve our joint objective of a speedy and full investigation.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that my country remains committed to a strong partnership between the United Nations, the EU and the relevant actors in the region — a partnership that builds on shared values and common goals.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for introducing the report (S/2011/43) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome the participation in today's Security Council meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, and we share his assessments.

We had hoped for a more objective statement by Mrs. Čitaku.

Russia supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia. In our view, it is undeniable that resolution 1244 (1999) remains in full effect and continues to be binding on all parties as the international legal basis for a Kosovo settlement and for ensuring security in the province. Our position of non-recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence has not changed.

We believe that it is important for the stakeholders to resume dialogue so as to reach a settlement of the Kosovo issue. In that connection, the unilateral actions of Pristina and the international presence in northern Kosovo are unacceptable. Those actions are aimed at changing realities on the ground in order to influence the modalities and outcome of the upcoming dialogue.

Russia does not consider the Kosovo Assembly elections held on 12 December 2010 to be legitimate, as they were organized by the authorities of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo and were not based on a decision by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as required by resolution 1244 (1999).

We cannot but take into account the fact that from the beginning, international monitoring organizations declined to certify the elections. Participation by the Serb community in the elections was limited. In northern Kosovo, Serbs essentially boycotted the event. Observers noted serious violations during the election process, including tampering with the electoral lists, the use of counterfeit ballots, multiple votes cast by the same people and bribery of voters. Also worrisome are the results achieved at the polls by radical Kosovo Albanian parties, in particular the Self-Determination Movement, which advocates for the creation of a greater Albania.

The security situation in the province remains tense, owing primarily to growing tendencies among Kosovo Albanians towards independent and largely provocative actions. We are concerned at the fact that the self-proclaimed authorities in the province, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, are carrying out infrastructure projects without coordinating with

UNMIK, and encouraging Kosovo Albanians to undertake unregulated and unilateral returns to their previous places of residence without appropriate legal authorization. Such actions could seriously exacerbate the inter-ethnic situation in northern Kosovo.

We share the concern of the Serb authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church at the situation that has developed in connection with the handover by the NATO Kosovo Force of the duty of protecting the province's most significant Serbian cultural and religious heritage sites to the Kosovo Police. We believe that those actions could create additional tensions over security in Kosovo, especially because further incidents of robbery and vandalism at Serbian holy sites occurred during the reporting period.

The situation of the return to Kosovo of internally displaced persons, including the Serb population, remains unsatisfactory, for many reasons. One of the main reasons is that returnees have no assurance of their own security. We continue to believe that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, on the basis of its mandate from the Security Council, should play the most active role possible in assisting with the Kosovo settlement process.

UNMIK must also fully carry out its duties in respect of the external representation of Kosovo in regional and international organizations and mechanisms.

Attempts to discredit UNMIK in the Kosovar media continue to be unacceptable. The campaign against United Nations staff threatens the security of international personnel and prevents them from fulfilling their duties.

We are deeply alarmed by the information in the Secretary-General's report regarding the investigations into allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, as reported by Special Rapporteur Dick Marty, a member of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The report not only is timely, but also has considerable moral and humanitarian significance. We welcome the adoption of a resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly in support of investigating the incidents mentioned in the document.

Carrying out such a detailed and comprehensive investigation is the duty of the international community. We agree with the arguments put forward by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia with regard to that, and support the establishment by the Security Council of a special international investigation mechanism accountable to the United Nations.

Such an investigation format is necessary since those activities could go far beyond the region, and given the extremely unsatisfactory situation in Kosovo with regard to witness protection, as mentioned in Mr. Gardetto's report to the Council of Europe. According to data contained in the report, in Kosovo, "there is a real threat of retaliation and key witnesses being eliminated". In essence, the only real way to protect witnesses and their relatives is by relocating them outside Kosovo.

It continues to be necessary for the Security Council to play a leading role in the settlement of Kosovo, as it remains the guarantor of compliance with international law, the United Nations Charter and the Council's own decisions.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): We too would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Lamberto Zannier, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, a country with which Gabon is proud to have excellent relations. We thank him for his statement, the content of which we fully support.

Throughout the period under review, the political situation in Kosovo was dominated by the holding, on 12 December 2010, of the first legislative elections since the contested unilateral declaration of independence, which took place on February 2008. We regret that those elections were not organized or supervised by UNMIK, as provided for in its mandate under resolution 1244 (1999).

We also regret that the resumption of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, which the General Assembly recommended in its resolution 64/298, of 9 September 2010, under the facilitation of the European Union, has been delayed owing to the holding of those elections. Furthermore, the publication of the Dick Marty report, detailing the inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in

human organs in Kosovo, is a source of concern to my delegation. We believe that this is an important issue that deserves all due attention. Gabon therefore supports the need for the Security Council to establish an investigation mechanism answerable to it in order to shed light on the facts highlighted in the Marty report. In that regard, we welcome UNMIK's readiness to provide the necessary support for those inquiries.

Furthermore, we deplore the deteriorating environment in Kosovo, in particular in the north, where UNMIK is subject to hostile and unjustified reporting by some media. We also deplore the fact that illegal construction has helped to stoke tension between the communities. We urge all parties to show restraint and to favour the path of dialogue in stead.

On the security front, while the situation remains generally calm, my delegation nevertheless continues to be concerned about the increase in the number of murders and cases of illegal possession of weapons. Organized crime, smuggling and drug trafficking contribute to an unsafe environment and continue to be of concern in Kosovo.

My delegation would again like to underscore the importance of the two parties pursuing talks on the issue of missing persons, which continues to undermine efforts at reconciliation among the various communities. However, we welcome the progress already made in that regard. We also welcome the fact that the parties have continued their cooperation on religious and cultural heritage.

With regard to the issue of the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, we are concerned about the financial and material difficulties that hinder their reintegration. We would therefore urge the international community to provide consistent assistance in order to encourage the return of those people to their places of origin.

I would like to reaffirm that my country promotes dialogue and consultation to settle crises and conflicts. In the case of Kosovo, Gabon rejects any unilateral declaration of independence and continues to strongly support respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic Serbia.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our appreciation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force, which continue to play an important role in the context of implementing resolution 1244 (1999). We also renew our support for the work of all agencies of the United Nations system present on the ground, including UNMIK and its entire staff, whose professionalism we commend.

Mr. Amieyeofori (Nigeria): Let me also join others in thanking His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for his very useful statement this afternoon. We would also like to thank Mrs. Vlora Çitaku for her statement and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier for his comprehensive update on the situation in Kosovo.

Nigeria welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43) pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999). We also welcome the continued collaboration between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the other facilitators in fostering peace and stability in Kosovo and the region. However, it is evident from today's briefings that there are still difficult challenges in Kosovo and in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). That situation requires the careful consideration of the Council.

In that regard, we want to observe that UNMIK continues to operate in difficult circumstances, with sustained media attacks undermining efforts by the Mission to fully deliver on its mandate. We deplore those attacks and urge restraint on the part of the parties involved. Nigeria believes that UNMIK still has an important role to play and that its presence and support is required to bolster efforts at assisting the communities to overcome their various challenges.

Nigeria shares the Secretary-General's concerns about the fragile security situation in northern Kosovo. Inter-ethnic tensions and attacks against the minority communities, as well as members of the international community, undermine the prospects for peace and stability in the territory. We believe that the perpetrators of crimes should be properly brought to justice, and efforts made to reach out to the victims. It is important to prevent such incidents from reoccurring by enhancing the necessary mechanisms for the protection of lives and property and by promoting mutual tolerance, harmony and coexistence among the people.

Nigeria remains convinced that sustained dialogue is indispensable to achieving a mutually acceptable solution to all outstanding issues in Kosovo. The parties should therefore remain fully committed to dialogue, in furtherance of General Assembly 64/298, adopted on 9 September 2010. We urge the parties to redouble their efforts to commence that process in the shortest possible time, taking into account the specific circumstances and concerns of all communities. The resulting overall peace dividend would be far-reaching for Kosovo and the region, as it would not only address the problem of insecurity but also open up economic opportunities for the various communities.

On the issue of illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo, highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, Nigeria considers it a very serious human rights issue that requires an international investigation, taking into account the various jurisdictions involved in the matter. We encourage UNMIK to provide the support that may be necessary to the process.

We welcome the increased support for returnees recorded during the reporting period. Efforts should be deployed to address concerns over the viability of conditions of return, including security, access to public services, housing and property rights and socio-economic opportunities. The absence of these critical elements will constrain efforts to promote the sustainable return of displaced persons, as well as reconciliation, longer-term stability and the development of Kosovo.

We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team for their unrelenting efforts in promoting peace and stability in Kosovo, as well as the region, and assure the Mission of our continued support.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I wish to thank Special Representative Lamberto Zannier for his very clear and comprehensive briefing to the Council, and both His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku, Acting Foreign Minister of Kosovo, for their statements and for the elements they have brought to our attention.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) presents us with a picture of a country that is facing serious challenges on its way — as we all hope — to peace and prosperity. It also draws attention to the work UNMIK has been doing together with the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and several other players on the ground in Kosovo.

Portugal would like to convey, as a contributor to EULEX and KFOR, as well as a country with a long involvement in the stabilization of the Balkans, our sincere appreciation for the work accomplished so far. Our joint efforts remain vital in order to consolidate peace and to draw the region closer to integration in the European institutional framework — an ambition that we share.

As regards political life in Kosovo, the December general elections are the main event on which to base an analysis of this period. Unfortunately, the elections suffered from some serious shortcomings and a high number of irregularities, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. The overall climate was peaceful, however, and the reaction by the Central Elections Commission and the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel was swift and managed to overcome some of the irregularities.

We believe it is important for Kosovo institutions and international players to continue working together in order to consolidate democratic institutions and foster solid commitment to democratic values and practice. It is also noteworthy that the participation of the Kosovo Serb community was higher than in 2007, in spite of scant turn-out north of the Ibër/Ibar River.

I took good note of the Special Representative's comments on the pressing economic and fiscal problems Kosovo is facing and the need to address these issues, lest they become an added element of instability.

Political uncertainty in Kosovo has also delayed the much-needed Pristina and Belgrade dialogue. Portugal urges both parties to start comprehensive negotiations under the auspices of the European Union, with a view to settle all of their differences in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 64/298, and to do so at the earliest possible occasion. This would undoubtedly be in the interests of both Pristina and Belgrade, and of the region and Europe as a whole.

Beyond the elections, other facts remain — more enduring and far-reaching in their consequences. Incidents between communities still occur, with victims on both sides, and other elements that may

trigger new tensions abound. UNMIK's efforts and dedication to ensure peace and security must be duly noted and appreciated. We therefore urge all actors on the ground to work with UNMIK fully and in good faith and to engage seriously in the process to settle their differences.

These incidents notwithstanding, it must be said that several indicators are encouraging, especially with respect to the development of municipal power. We hope that further investment in education and human and financial resources will generate strengthened institutions and capabilities. We expect that national and local authorities will find balanced solutions to the issues that inevitably arise between the communities.

I would also like to stress the importance of the ongoing cooperation between Kosovo authorities and EULEX regarding the rule of law. Again, the task facing Kosovo's Administration is one of institution- and capacity-building. We commend and support the efforts of the European Union Special Representative in this context.

Concerning the report of Mr. Dick Marty to the Council of Europe, I took note of the Special Representative's references to the seriousness of these allegations and I paid careful attention to what Minister Jeremić said to the Council on this subject. I took special note of his comments concerning the possibly wider regional dimension of this issue and the need to extend effective protection to witnesses. The allegations are indeed extremely disturbing, and if proved would amount to particularly despicable crimes. They deserve a very thorough investigation. We welcome the readiness expressed by Kosovo and Albania to cooperate in that regard.

We fully support EULEX's investigations on this matter that are already under way, and we hope that they will allow for a full clarification of the allegations. But we also believe that we must follow this issue closely and keep an open mind on any future action that the investigations may require. In line with what we have always maintained concerning other serious crimes, whether in the region or elsewhere, impunity is not only intolerable in itself, but also an obstacle to peace and to a healthy and cooperative political environment.

The work done by UNMIK in securing religious and cultural sites in Kosovo stands out as a particularly successful aspect of this Mission's mandate. It can be a very important contribution to interfaith contact and dialogue. Portugal expresses its optimism towards the continued good results of UNMIK's work on this issue. We also praise the role played by the Council of Europe's Reconstruction Implementation Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, KFOR and EULEX so that Kosovo's rich heritage, which shines well beyond its borders, is safeguarded from turmoil and endures for centuries to come.

To conclude, the report we are discussing today reminds us once more how important it is for Kosovo and Serbia to start a European Union-facilitated dialogue. It will eventually close this chapter of their history, reinforce peace and stability in the Balkans and help the whole region in fulfilling its European integration objections.

Mr. Vinay Kumar (India): I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zannier for his briefing. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for his country's perspective on the situation in Kosovo. My delegation has carefully listened to the statement of Kosovo's representative, Mrs. Vlora Çitaku.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2011/43) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has brought out in detail the prevailing situation there. We note that with UNMIK's facilitation, Belgrade and Pristina have continued to make progress on some issues, including missing persons and religious and cultural heritage. We encourage the two parties to address all of the remaining issues seriously and expeditiously. UNMIK should also continue its work on facilitating communication between the two parties.

We note from the report of the Secretary-General that, although the overall security situation in Kosovo is relatively calm, the continued prevalence of individual as well as organized crime makes the security situation potentially volatile. In this connection, the report of the Council of Europe's Special Rapporteur, Mr. Dick Marty, which contains allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs, merits examination. We suggest that a thorough and impartial investigation be carried out by an entity legally empowered to look into all aspects of the matter.

The Secretary-General's report shows that a considerable number of tasks under pillars 1 and 2 — concerning police, justice and civil administration, which are monitored by UNMIK — remain to be accomplished. Accordingly, we urge the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue to implement UNMIK's mandate.

We call on all parties to cooperate fully with UNMIK and to facilitate its work. We hope that all the issues concerning Kosovo will be resolved peacefully through consultation and dialogue. We also support the extension of UNMIK's mandate so that it can continue to work towards the fulfilment of the tasks mandated to it by the Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Brazil.

I welcome His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and thank him for his remarks. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, for his briefing, and Mrs. Vlora Çitaku for her remarks.

Stability in the Balkans is a matter of serious concern to Brazil. We see progress and commend the efforts that have been made to ensure that the region remains stable and on its way towards further integration and cooperation. Brazil continues to believe that resolution 1244 (1999) offers an adequate framework for a negotiated settlement of the dispute. We are confident that a fair and legitimate solution can be reached under the auspices of the Security Council, consistent with its authority and primary responsibility in matters pertaining to international peace and security.

Brazil supports the invaluable work carried out by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in implementing its Security Council mandate. UNMIK has a key role to play in Kosovo under the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), particularly in promoting engagement among Pristina, Belgrade and other relevant stakeholders. I wish to comment on recent political developments on the ground that may have an impact on efforts towards a final settlement.

The 12 December elections for the Kosovo Assembly were held in a peaceful atmosphere, as stressed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/43). We are concerned, however, by the fact that UNMIK did not participate in the preparations for these elections and that they were not called by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. It is worth recalling that, under resolution 1244 (1999), the holding of elections is one of the main responsibilities of the international civil presence in Kosovo. Attention also needs to be paid to the remarks made by international observers regarding complaints and allegations of irregularities in the voting. The accusations that the elections in Kosovo failed to meet international standards need to be investigated.

The Secretary-General's report also highlights a number of violent incidents affecting members of the international community in Kosovo. Although the overall security situation in Kosovo remains relatively calm, attacks targeted specifically against international officers and United Nations staff members cannot be tolerated. Brazil shares the Secretary-General's concern over the continued misrepresentation of UNMIK's activities in northern Kosovo and open challenges to its authority. This situation poses a concrete threat to United Nations personnel and creates difficulties in the fulfilment of UNMIK's mandate.

We also take note of Mr. Jeremić's comments regarding the investigation of allegations of inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo. The severity of such allegations cannot be dismissed. A proper and credible investigation must be carried out. It would be interesting to explore possible options that take into account the need to involve various jurisdictions and the importance of ensuring consistency with resolution 1244 (1999).

In conclusion, we are convinced that the Council should continue to keep political developments in Kosovo under close review. It is our hope that the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade can take place without further delay. As envisaged in General Assembly resolution 64/298, adopted in September 2010, it is vital that these negotiations bear fruit. Dialogue is the best way to resolve outstanding issues and to ensure peace, security and stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.